DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 329 507 SO 030 398

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TITLE American Focus on World Constitutions. Teacher's Guide.
INSTITUTION Utah Endowment for the Humanities, Salt Lake City.
PUB DATE Jun 88
NOTE 39p.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Comparative Analysis; *Constitutional Law; Foreign Countries; Global Approach; Governmental Structure; High Schools; Instructional Materials; *International Relations; Social Studies; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS United States Constitution

ABSTRACT

This curriculum project was designed to familiarize high school students with their own constitutional roots while gaining a better understanding of governmental systems developed by other nations. The project uses the U.S. Constitution as a baseline for analyzing the constitutions of other nations, and is intended to supplement courses in such subjects as U.S. history, comparative governments, international relations, and world civilizations. The five lessons included in the unit require an estimated 5 to 8 weeks to implement. The lessons are entitled: (1) What's in a Constitution?; (2) The U.S. Constitution: A Review; (3) Constitutions of the World; (4) Focus on a Theme: Human Rights; and (5) A Constitutional Convention...on Mars. Sixteen nations, providing a cross-section of major governmental forms, geographic regions, and levels of economic development were selected for comparative study. The countries included are Ethiopia, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Canada, Chile, China, France, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, the Soviet Union, Swaziland, and the United Kingdom. (DB)

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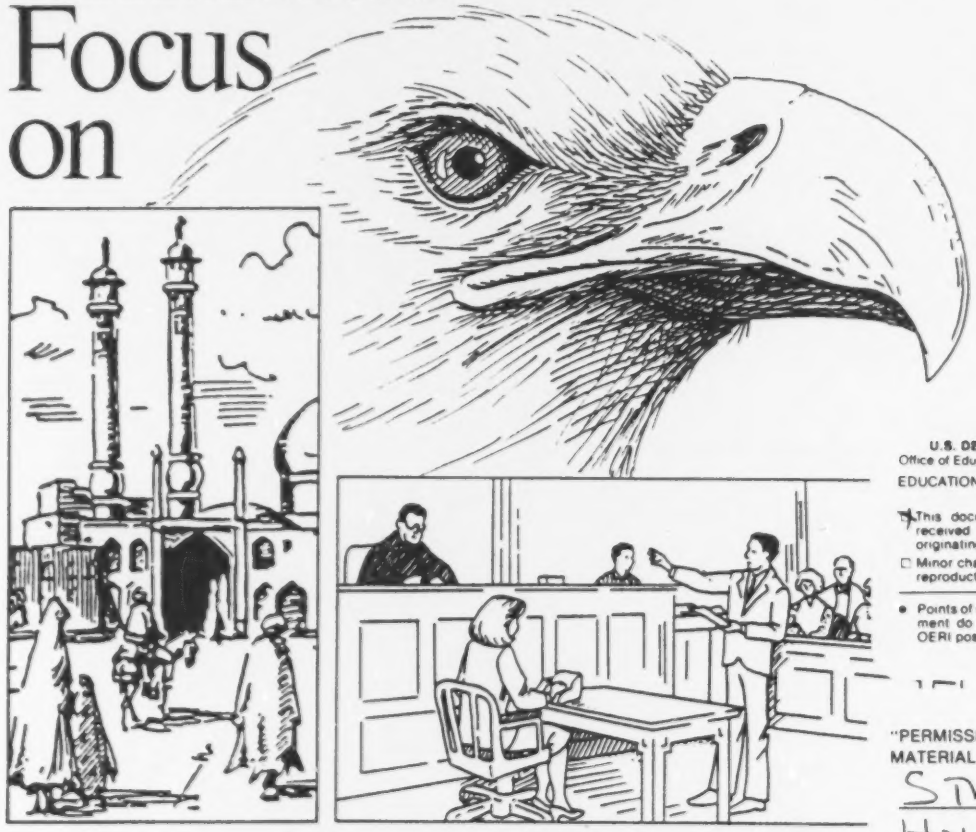
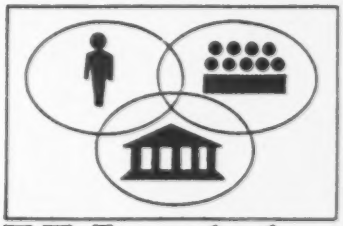
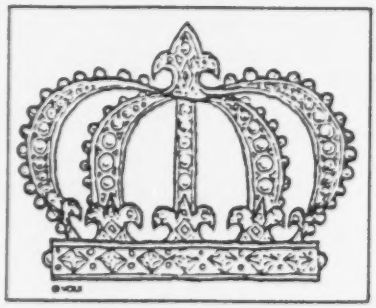
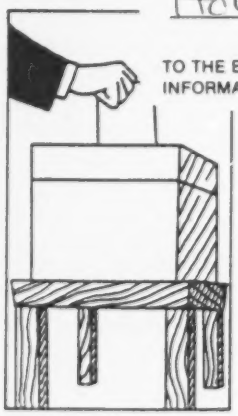
TEACHER'S GUIDE

American Focus on World Constitutions









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A PROJECT OF THE UTAH ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

SO 020 398

AMERICAN FOCUS ON WORLD CONSTITUTIONS

Project Sponsors:

Utah Endowment for the Humanities

Jordan School District

Utah State Office of Education

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Completed June 1988

Printed by: Jordan School District
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Sandy, Utah 84070

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AMERICAN FOCUS ON WORLD CONSTITUTIONS

Contents:

	Page
Introduction	1
Acknowledgements	2
Lesson Sequence	
Lesson #1 - What's in a Constitution?	3
Lesson #2 - The U.S. Constitution: A Review	8
Lesson #3 - Constitutions of the World	13
Lesson #4 - Focus on a Theme: Human Rights	21
Lesson #5 - A Constitutional Convention ... on Mars	30
Additional Activities	33
Sources	35

Appendices: A Constitutions and U.N. Charter

B Lesson Readings and Worksheets

Introduction

The years 1987-1991 frame a special period for Americans striving to better understand a political foundation that has served us so well. Two centuries after its ratification, the U.S. Constitution is the world's oldest working constitution. Many other nations have patterned their own primary legal documents on the U.S. model. Despite amendments and periodic controversies, most Americans seem content that their Constitution will continue to weather political storms.

This curriculum was spawned by the advent of our constitution's bicentennial, and by questions about what it is that makes "We the People" of the United States unique in the world. Conscious that there are over 160 other national groupings of "We the People" who are also unique, it seemed timely and appropriate to use the constitutions of different countries as vehicles for examining our similarities and differences.

The two-fold goal of this project, then, was to have American high school students increase familiarity with their own constitutional roots while gaining a better understanding of governmental systems developed by other national cultures. Through research activities, students learn how a nation's constitution reflects the history and values of the culture that produced it.

"American Focus on World Constitutions" is intended to supplement high school courses such as U.S. History, Comparative Governments, International Relations, and World Civilizations. The curriculum uses the U.S. Constitution as a baseline for analysing other nations' constitutions. In the second lesson, students are given a review of the U.S. document. A field-test of the curriculum in an International Relations class at Alta High School indicated that the review was quite necessary. Subsequent lessons afford students opportunities to role-play officials of different nations in a human rights conference, and in a convention to create a constitution for a human colony on Mars.

Because of time and resource constraints that became manifest as the project developed, the scope of "American Focus..." is limited primarily to constitutional comparisons at the national level of government. Although students distinguish between unitary and federal systems, close examination of provincial processes is left to classes whose interest --and time-- permits such scrutiny. Ideas for more country-intensive activities appear in the Additional Activities section of this guide.

Sixteen nations were selected for inclusion with the international research activities and simulations. They provide a cross-section of major government forms, geographic regions, and levels of economic development. The constitutions of three countries --Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and the Philippines-- have recently been rewritten. Other countries included are Canada, Chile, China, France, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Poland, South Africa, the Soviet Union, Swaziland, and the United Kingdom. Constitutional documents for all of the countries, along with the United Nations Charter, are contained in Appendix A. Teachers should caution students against generalizing political and cultural characteristics of an entire region or other grouping of countries from the constitution samples provided in this curriculum.

The five main lesson units of "American Focus..." require 5-to-8 weeks to implement. Suggestions for condensing or expanding the curriculum appear in the Additional Activities section. The educators involved in this project would very much appreciate comments, criticisms, and suggestions from teachers and administrators who use the curriculum.

Acknowledgements

"American Focus on World Constitutions" was made possible by a generous grant from the Utah Endowment for the Humanities. Special thanks are extended to Delmont Oswald and Cynthia Buckingham for their continuing commitment to global education, as well as their great patience in allowing the completion of this project.

Support on a day-to-day basis was provided by JoAnn Seghini and Nedra Perkins, of the Jordan School District's Curriculum and Staff Development office. They contributed an important mix of curriculum advice and secretarial, printing, and fiscal services that helped bring the project together. Jordan District is fortunate to have administrators so attuned to the need for global education.

The Utah State Office of Education provided valuable support, as a project co-sponsor, and in the persons of Nancy Mathews, Joyce Hansen, and Bruce Griffin. I am especially indebted to Ms. Mathews, who serves the State Office as Director of Law-Related and Citizenship Education. Many ideas for "American Focus..." lessons were derived from literature in the LRE library that Nancy maintains, and in meetings with her. Additional curriculum ideas were gained from Joyce Hansen, the International Education Specialist who, with Curriculum and Instruction Director Bruce Griffin, gave the materials a final review.

Advice on developing effective simulations was received from veteran teacher Dave Chavis, whom Jordan District is lucky to have practising at Brighton High School. Dave also lectures on classroom teaching methods at Westminster College.

In order to achieve content accuracy, "American Focus..." drew upon the legal scholarship of Professors Jefferson Fordham and Howard Ball, at the University of Utah. Dr. Fordham is a former dean of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and now serves as Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Utah Law School. Dr. Ball is a Professor of Political Science at the "U", and currently serves as Dean of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. I am grateful to have had the unique input of these gentlemen in developing and refining the curriculum.

Thanks are due also to Dr. Walter McPhie, of the University of Utah's Educational Studies Department. Walt, who has for years graciously tolerated my academic vicissitudes, contributed thought and time to developing testing instruments for the project.

Several colleagues at Alta High helped with background materials and activities for teaching the U.S. Constitution. Special thanks to Don Ward, Jane Quimby, and Dennis Randall.

The cover page and graphics for Lesson #5 were designed and sketched by Janet McKinlay, a free-lance artist for Jordan School District.

Oceana Publications Inc. kindly gave permission to reproduce the constitution of Iran, which appears in their series Constitutions of the Countries of the World. The U.S. State Department provided a copy of the new Ethiopian constitution. All other constitutional documents were obtained through embassies of the respective countries.

Finally, a note of appreciation to Mike Spurgin and the Salt Lake City Chapter of Amnesty International, for providing human rights reports used in this curriculum. The A.I. logo appears in Lesson #4.

Stanley T. Holmes III
Salt Lake City
June 1988

LESSON #1 _____

What's in a Constitution?

Objectives: Students will be able to

- define what a constitution is
- explain how a constitution reflects a nation's culture and history
- describe component parts of a constitution
- describe different types of political systems (governments)

Materials needed: chalkboard and chalk.

Time required: 2 class periods

Procedures:

1. Teacher asks "When someone asks you to describe a particular country, what aspects of the country do you focus on? For example, how would you describe Iran?"

   a. List responses on the chalkboard.
   Responses may include: Khomeini, Moslems, desert, camels, hot, nomads, Middle East, fanatics, terrorists, 3rd World country, backward country, oil, strict laws, Iran-Iraq War, revolution, etc.

2. Ask: "What do you think it would be like to live in Iran?"

   a. List responses on chalkboard.
   Responses may include: church power everywhere, poverty, missile attacks, etc.

3. Ask: "How would we get a better idea about what life is really like in Iran?"

   a. List responses on chalkboard.
   Responses may include: visit the country, interview Iranians or people who have been there, read newspaper articles, books, or other written accounts, etc.

4. Tell the students that there is one reference document that would tell us a lot about Iran, including the structure of their government, values on which their law is based, and the way Iranian people are expected to behave.

   a. Ask: "Do you have an idea what that document might be?"
   Answer: The national constitution.

   b. Explain that --as is the case with the U. S. Constitution-- the Iranian Constitution tells much about the country and its people. Of the 160-plus countries in the world today, all but ten have their own constitution. [The remaining ten governments use combinations of laws or decrees rather than a single document.]

5. Define constitution as: a written statement describing the basic principles and laws of a nation that determine the powers and duties of the government, and guarantee certain rights to the people.

6. Ask: "Specifically, what does a constitution contain?"

   Acknowledge students responses.

   a. Explain that although all are unique, most national constitutions contain the following information sections: (list on chalkboard)

      I. A preamble, or introductory articles, stating the society's purpose and objectives.

      II. Structure and functions of government.
      - what form of government
      - divisions of authority (esp. executive, legislative, judicial)
      - decision-making processes
      - methods of election and appointment

      III. Individual rights, freedoms, and protections.
      - permitted behavior
      - legal procedures

      IV. Amendment process, for changing the constitution.

   b. Cite the following information, to see if students can match each item with the appropriate constitution section.

      - ability to practise religion - - - Individual rights, freedoms
      - the people have united to reject colonial dictators - - - Preamble
      - two-thirds of Parliament can amend the constitution - - - Amendments
      - the president has power to declare war - - - Structure and functions

7. Parts of a Constitution

   a. Say: "Let's take a closer look at what each constitution tells about the country."

   b. First; the preamble gives an indication of the mood of a society at the time the constitution was signed. It tells why the constitution was written. Since most national constitutions have been created or re-written since World War II, we can get a fairly up-to-date sense of the peoples' goals.

      In the preamble, we often read that the country has recently freed itself from an oppressive form of government, like a foreign colonial power. The preamble may state some ongoing principles of governance that reflect the society's traditions. Some preambles proclaim the society's long-range goal, such as equality for all, or socialism, or a world order based on Islam.

   c. Next; the sections on structure and functions of government tells us who has specific authority, and how decisions are made.

      There are several forms of government in the world today. Specific terms are used to describe them, and are often mentioned specifically in the constitution.

The following are terms commonly used to describe forms of government. (write on chalkboard or chart)

Monarchy --- political system in which a king, queen, or other royal officer has supreme power.

Constitutional Monarchy --- system in which the monarch's powers are limited by law; the monarch may serve only ceremonial functions.

Republic --- form of government having a chief of state who is not a monarch, and in which citizens elect leaders responsible to them.

Democracy --- political system in which a majority of the people control the government directly or through representatives.

Parliamentary --- political system in which the largest share of power is exercised by officials of the legislature (parliament).

Military / Martial --- power is held by one or more members of the armed forces.

Oligarchy --- government in which a small group (civilian or military) exercises control.

Marxist / Socialist --- political system in which the government controls key sectors of the economy.

Theocracy --- form of government guided by religious laws and leaders. (e.g. Islamic)

Federal --- political structure in which the central (national) government shares power with regional or local governments.

Unitary --- political structure in which the central (national) government controls all lower levels of government.

Say: "It is important to remember that more than one of these terms can be used to describe a particular country. For example, the United States is a federal republic. The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary form of government. Both are democracies."

The constitution describes national decision-making processes, and which section of government holds specific powers and authority. Political offices and agencies are generally grouped into the categories of executive, legislative, and judicial.

The executive branch includes the monarch, president, or other chief administrator(s), along with the ministers, or secretaries, of government departments. Often a council of ministers (cabinet) advises the chief executive. Generally, a nation's executive branch is responsible for enforcing laws and conducting day-to-day affairs of the government. In some cases, however, the executive branch also issues decrees that have the force of law. Foreign policy powers are usually shared between the executive and legislative branches.

For most countries, laws originate in the legislative branch. Legislatures may have one, two, or three chambers, and are refered to as unicameral, bicameral, or tricameral. Diet, assembly, congress, and parliament are among words used to designate legislatures. The U.S. Congress, for example, is bicameral; with a Senate and a House

of Representatives. Budget authority is usually held by the country's legislature. Many constitutions require support from all legislative chambers before laws are passed.

Each country's judicial branch has responsibility for interpreting and applying laws. Judicial systems are often headed by a Supreme Court that holds top appellate (appeals) authority, and is commonly empowered to decide whether laws and other government actions are constitutional. National court systems extend to the local level, where ordinary citizens sometimes join judges in deciding criminal and civil cases.

Governmental authority is occasionally shared with additional political bodies outside of the common three-branch framework. In Nicaragua, an independent Electoral branch has been added to administer all elections. The communist parties of several countries function outside of the official government structure and may dominate government affairs even though no constitutional powers are specified. In Iran, government policy is shaped and guided in accordance with religious principles and law. Tribal societies, such as Swaziland, may retain traditional offices and practises alongside a more modern government structure.

Decision-making authority often overlaps structural divisions. In some countries, offices and functions of two or more branches are combined. The prime minister, for example, may serve as both chief executive and member of parliament. In the United States, separation of power provisions attempt to give each branch distinct authority.

As a safety measure, however, the U.S. and many other countries' constitutions contain checks and balances provisions meant to prevent any one government branch from getting too powerful. Veto, impeachment, and judicial review functions are some of the checks and balances methods used.

Constitutions almost always contain instructions for the election and appointment of government officials.

d. Another section, or set of provisions, included with many constitutions addresses the rights, freedoms, and protections guaranteed to citizens of the country. Do persons have the right to freely express their opinions, to practise their religions, and to pursue their own careers without fear of punishment from the government? Individual rights also refer to the ways a country treats those accused of criminal activity. Is the legal process fair, open, and the same for everyone?

In setting forth constitutional principles of human rights, countries often specify conditions under which rights can be suspended, by whom, and for how long.

e. Finally; most constitutions describe procedures for amending the document. Governments realize that situations change, and that new developments may necessitate an adaptation of the country's basic laws.

8. Review / Test Questions (next page)

Lesson #1: What's In A Constitution?

REVIEW / TEST QUESTIONS

1. Name the three most common branches of national government.
   (executive, legislative, judicial)

2. A written statement describing the basic principles and laws of a nation is called a....
   (constitution)

3. How is a constitutional monarchy different from a simple monarchy?
   (in the former, the monarch's power is limited by law)

4. What kind of information is contained in a constitution's preamble?
   (it may state the society's purpose and objectives,
   and explain why the constitution was written)

5. The government of San Padre has just been overthrown by members of its armed forces. Four generals have declared themselves in control until order is restored. What type of government does San Padre now have?
   (a military/martial oligarchy, often called a junta)

6. In 1974, U.S. President Nixon was threatened with impeachment by Congress, for his role in the Watergate scandal. The power of our legislature to remove the chief executive is part of a constitutional safety measure known as .....
   (checks and balances)

7. Why do you think some countries use a unitary form of government?
   (to implement national economic plans at all levels,
   to exercise strict social control, etc.)

8. Why is it important --or is it important-- for a constitution to identify citizens' rights, freedoms, and protections?
   (to avoid arbitrary discrimination, to let citizens know the limits, etc.)

9. Should it be easy or difficult to amend the constitution? Why?
   (easy: necessary change won't be delayed;
   difficult: damage of frivolous or excessive change will be avoided; etc.)

10. Who should be responsible for creating a country's constitution? Voting-aged male land-owners? All economic, ethnic, and racial groups? Others?
    (accept reasoned responses)

11. Several years ago, the Vatican ordered Catholic priests to resign from political offices. In Iran, the most powerful government positions are held by Moslem leaders. Should church and state be kept separated, or is it OK for the two to mix?
    (accept reasoned responses)

12. Some constitutions set limits on the number of terms their chief executive can serve. Why is this idea good or bad?
    (Good: the majority can be misled, as was the case in Nazi Germany; a limited term protects against tyranny; Bad: if someone is doing a good job, and is popular, it is unfair to force them out of office; accept reasoned responses)

The U.S. Constitution: A Review

Objectives: Students will be able to

- describe demographic, economic, political, and geographic features of the United States
- summarize events in the creation of the United States and its constitution
- explain the basic structure and functions of the U.S. federal government
- identify individual rights, freedoms, and protections contained in the U.S. Constitution
- describe the process for amending the constitution

Materials needed: Country Profile worksheets and Constitution worksheets [Appendix B], copies of the U.S. Constitution, World Almanac and Book of Facts, other references (American History books, encyclopedias), Senior Scholastic map "Which World Do You Live In?" (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Worlds), news articles on court cases or events involving applications of the U.S. Constitution, world atlas.

Time required: 4-6 class periods

Procedures:

1. Tell students that they will soon be using the constitutions of other countries to learn about the political systems and values of different peoples.

   a. Say: "Before starting, though, it will be important for us to take another look at our own constitution. Since most constitutions have similar sections of information, we will use the U.S. Constitution as a basis for comparing the other national documents. That means we will have to be familiar with the principles and political structure contained in America's basic legal document."

2. Students will complete a Country Profile sheet on the United States.

   Note: If time is limited, the class may drop this step (Country Profile) and move directly to the Constitution worksheet packet.

   a. Say: "First, we will do a little background research on the United States. Each one of you will receive a Country Profile sheet that lists information categories for you to complete."

   b. Distribute one Country Profile sheet to each student.

   Students may be allowed to complete the Country Profile singly or in groups of three or four. If groups are used, one effective team-learning process divides worksheet components similarly among members of each of the groups. Students responsible for a

particular section can meet as an "expert" group to verify information before reporting back to share data with the original groups. This method often takes less time than having each student research the Country Profile individually.

c. Explain that students will be given reference sources to complete the Country Profile worksheets.

Teacher should have readily available World Almanacs and other sources of country information listed in "Materials needed", above. It may be useful to hold class in the school library or media center for this activity.

d. Review parts of the Country Profile worksheet with students, and answer any questions they may have.

Note: If the Senior Scholastic "Which World...?" map is not available, explain to students that the 1st World includes industrialized capitalist countries, the 2nd World includes industrialized socialist countries, 3rd World countries are primarily agricultural and have per capita incomes generally under $3,000, and 4th World countries are at the bottom of the 3rd World where per capita incomes do not exceed $300.

Refer to the Teacher's copy of the Country Profile of the U.S. for specific details.

Allow sufficient time for students to complete this exercise.

e. Check finished Country Profiles with the class. Refer to the Teacher's copy for information.

3. Students will complete a Constitution worksheet on the U.S. Constitution.

Note: Optional activity - To prepare students for this section, the Teacher might rewrite some portion(s) of the U.S. Constitution in a way that alters its meaning or intent. Then, see if the students can spot the changes.

a. Say: "Now, we will turn to the U.S. Constitution, and examine its various parts."

b. Give each student a Constitution worksheet packet and a copy of the Constitution of the United States.

c. Explain that students will use the completed Country Profile and the U.S. Constitution itself to complete the worksheet packet.

Note: Teacher may again consider the team-learning approach to this activity.

d. Review parts of the Constitution worksheet packet with students, and answer any questions they may have. Refer to the Teacher's copy of the worksheet for specific information.

(1) Tell students that much of the information on pages A and B can be taken from the completed Country Profile, or from the same sources. Data for the sections on "Development of the Constitution" and "Changes in the Constitution" (i.e. amendments) should be available in an American History textbook. The "Applications of the Constitution" section may be delayed until the rest of the worksheet is completed, as students should then have a better sense of constitutional issues ...historically, and in the news today.

Teacher may want to have students complete sections of pages A and B before continuing.

(2) Go over each of the worksheet pages 1 through 6 with the students, discussing components listed in the left-hand column. Tell students that there are one or more passages in the U.S. Constitution addressing each of the structural parts, functions, or values listed. Mention that they do not have to fill in the government structure diagram (page 2) until later.

e. Allow students sufficient time to complete the worksheet.

This activity lends itself well to team-learning methods, particularly if time is short.

f. Check finished Constitution worksheet with the class.

Be careful to ensure that students are not confused about the association of constitution provisions with appropriate headings on the worksheet. They will be using this worksheet format for other national constitutions.

Note: After reviewing the structure and functions (page 1) section of the worksheet, teacher should diagram U.S. governmental structure on the chalkboard. Students will reproduce this on page 2 of their worksheets. In Lesson #3, they will be expected to construct similar diagrams of their assigned countries' governments.

g. Teacher may, at this time, elect to have students use an American History text or current news articles to consider practical applications of the U.S. Constitution.

4. Review / Test Questions (next page)

REVIEW / TEST QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the first U.S. constitutional document that preceded our current constitution? (Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union)

2. Which branch of government authorizes federal spending each year?
   (legislative / Congress)

3. Why is the U.S. government referred to as a federal system?
   (because the dominant national government shares some powers with state and local governments)

4. Explain the rights and freedoms contained in the 1st Amendment.
   (provides for freedom of religion, speech, and press, and for the rights to peacefully assemble and petition the government)

5. The president strongly opposes a trade bill that is favored by a majority in Congress. What must the president and his/her Senate supporters do to keep the bill from becoming law?
   (if the bill passes both houses of Congress, the president vetoes it; then the president's supporters need to convince one-third-plus-one members of either house not to vote in favor of a veto override)

6. Craig was acquitted of shoplifting charges. Three months later, a new witness came forward swearing that Craig was really guilty. Can Craig be tried again for the shoplifting charge? Why, or why not?
   (no; he can't, because he is protected from double jeopardy by the 5th Amendment)

7. How did Americans' colonial experiences influence the constitutional power granted to the executive branch?
   (Americans did not want a supreme, monarchal executive; they limited the executive's power with checks and balances)

8. Why do you suppose Supreme Court justices are appointed for life?
   (to insulate them from political pressures in maintaining office)

9. Unlike some countries, the United States has no constitutional provisions assuring economic security for its citizens? Why?
   (opposition to excessive government regulation; possible damage to free enterprise capitalism --laissez faire preference; weakening personal initiative; etc.)

10. In 1973, following America's unpleasant experience in Indo-China, Congress passed the "War Powers Act" limiting the president's authority to commit U.S. troops to combat. What do you think are the main arguments for and against such executive restrictions?
    (For: one person --the president-- could make a tragic mistake;
    Against: someone must be able to make quick decisions, and Congress may take too long to act; accept reasoned responses)

11. A group called U.S.English wants to protect the dominance of English with a constitutional amendment declaring it the official language of the United States. The group wants bilingual programs cut back or eliminated. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of such a move?
    (Advantages: stronger incentive for minorities to learn the mainstream language, and improve their chances to advance; Disadvantages: minority traditions will die with the languages, to our detriment culturally; accept reasoned responses)

12. The Supreme Court has given states the discretionary authority to impose capital punishment. Now, punishment for the same crime can mean death in one state, imprisonment with parole in another. Is that fair, just, and ethically responsible?
(accept reasoned responses)

LESSON #3 _____

Constitutions of the World

Objectives: For each foreign country assigned them, students will be able to

- describe demographic, economic, political, geographical features
- summarize events in the creation of the country and its constitution
- explain the basic structure and functions of the national government
- identify individual rights, freedoms, and protections contained in the constitution
- describe the process for amending the constitution
- compare and contrast features of their assigned constitution with those of other nations' constitutions

Students will also be able to describe main organs of the United Nations and their functions.

Materials needed: At least one copy of each foreign constitution, and copies of the Charter of the United Nations for each student [Appendix A]; Country Profile sheets, Constitution worksheet packets, Constitution Comparisons worksheet packets, U.S. State Department "Background Notes" packets for each country, and United Nations worksheet packets [Appendix B]; world atlases, World Almanac and Book of Facts, Senior Scholastic map "Which World Do You Live In?", other reference sources [including encyclopedias and specific foreign constitution references such as "Constitutions of the World" (Blaustein-Flanz) and "Clements' Encyclopedia of World Governments], news articles on constitutional issues in the 16 foreign countries and the U.N., chalkboard and chalk.

Time required: Part A - 7-12 class periods
Part B - 3 class periods

Procedures:

PART A: NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONS

1. Tell students they will now analyze the constitutions of foreign countries, using the U.S. Constitution as a basis for comparison.

   a. Say: "We will use our own constitution as a baseline because it is the most familiar to us. You will find that many of the sections and provisions of other countries' constitutions are similar to ours. Some, however, may be very different. Some constitutions emphasize political or cultural priorities that do not appear in the U.S. constitution. Others lack provisions for aspects of life we consider very important. You will see that no two constitutions are exactly the same, just as no two nations of people are exactly the same. Each is unique."

2. Assign a foreign country to each student.

   a. On the chalkboard, write the names of the countries included for analysis in this curriculum. Canada, Chile, China, Ethiopia, France, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nicaragua, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, Soviet Union, Swaziland, United Kingdom.

      Tell students that these countries were selected to represent a variety of government types, cultures, and geographic regions.

   b. Have each student select one country.

      Note: Teacher may have two or more students assigned to each country, depending on class size. Research tends to proceed more quickly and thoroughly if more than one student is responsible for each country.

   c. (Encouraged) Before the constitution research activity begins, and if time permits, teacher may wish to have students decorate the classroom with flags, posters, and other images of their particular countries. Each country's national anthem might also be displayed. Videos, slides, music, and foods of individual countries will aid in preparing a positive learning environment for this activity.

3. Students will complete a Country Profile sheet on their assigned country.

   a. Say: "As with our review of the U.S. political system, we will begin the study of other nations with a little background research. The Country Profile you'll complete for your assigned country is the same as the one you completed for the U.S."

   b. Give each student a Country Profile worksheet and a U.S. State Dept. "Background Notes" packet for his/her country.

      Ask if students have any questions about the Country Profile sheets.

      Explain that they should use the State Dept. packet and other available references to complete the Country Profile worksheet. Teacher should have readily available World Almanacs and other sources of country information listed in "Materials needed", above. It may be useful to conduct this part of the lesson in the school library or media center.

   c. Allow sufficient time for students to complete this exercise.

   d. Check finished Country Profiles with student representative(s) of each country.

4. Students will complete a Constitution worksheet packet on their assigned country's constitution.

   a. Say: "Now, each of you will receive a copy of your country's constitution. As we did with the U.S. Constitution, you will examine the various parts of this basic document from a foreign country."

   b. Give each student a Constitution worksheet packet and a copy of the constitution of his assigned country.

      Tell the student assigned to the United Kingdom that there is no constitution, but that

s/he will instead analyze several of the many documents that comprise that country's political foundation.

c. Explain that students will use the completed Country Profile sheet and the nation's constitution to complete the worksheet packet.

d. Review parts of the Constitution worksheet packet with students, and answer any questions they may have.. Refer to the Teacher's copy of the packet for specific information.

(1) Remind students that much of the information on pages A and B can be taken from the completed Country Profile, or from the same sources. Data for the sections on "Development of the Constitution" and "Changes in the Constitution" may be gained from the State Dept. reports and from other references. The "Applications of the Constitution" section is best delayed until the rest of the worksheet is completed, when students have a better sense of constitutional issues...historically, and in the news today.

Teacher should check students' progress on pages A and B before allowing them to continue.

(2) Ask students if they have any remaining questions about constitution component headings listed in the left-hand column of pages 1 through 6 of the worksheet packet.

Explain that some of their constitutions have a table of contents in the front, and that most have section headings that indicate what subsequent articles cover.

Be sure students understand that the Constitution worksheet packet is keyed to the U.S. Constitution, and that some other country constitutions may not have passages related to the structural parts, functions, or values listed. At the same time, in some document sections, other constitutions may have more information than is contained in the U.S. Constitution. There should be sufficient room, as in the "Other Rights" section, to list additional provisions.

Tell students they should look for both the similar and the unique in each document.

Advise students that some constitutions make reference to entities outside the formal government structure that have significant political power.
(e.g. the USSR's Communist Party; Iran's Islamic hierarchy)
These should also be noted in the government structure diagram section (page 2) of the worksheet.

e. Allow students sufficient time to complete the worksheet packet.

This portion of the lesson requires at least two class periods, plus homework, to complete.

Monitor student progress, refering to the Teacher's copy of each country's worksheet packet as needed. Be sure students cite article numbers, or other document references, for provisions listed.

f. Check each student's finished Constitution worksheet with the Teacher's copy.

g. Give each student a news article or other reading that addresses some constitutional issue specific to the student's country.
(e.g. the Soviet process for ratifying arms control treaties)

Have the student identify the issue and applicable constitution provisions, then summarize both in the "Applications" section of page B on the worksheet.

5. Students will compare and contrast their assigned governments.

   a. Say: "Now that you've studied your countries' constitutions, let's see how the political systems compare with each other. Each of you will have an opportunity to describe your country's basic government structure and functions to the class. You'll be able to see some of the similarities and differences between other constitutions of the world."

   b. Distribute copies of the Constitution Comparisons worksheet packet.

      Explain that students will use their Country Profile and Constitutions worksheets to complete their country's section of the Comparisons worksheet, then present it to the other students. Using information from each country presentation, students will take notes and complete the entire worksheet packet. Tell students that you (Teacher) will provide information for worksheet sections on the United States and the United Nations.

   c. Teacher gives students information to complete the United States section of the Constitutions Comparisons worksheet.

      (1) On the chalkboard, outline headings as they appear on the worksheet.

      (2) Using Teacher's copy of the worksheet, summarize essential U.S. Constitution data under each heading. Explain why government authority and functions are distributed this way. Mention which offices are appointed and which are elected.

      (3) After finishing the U.S. section, leave headings on the chalkboard for students to use when citing information on their assigned constitutions.

      (4) Tell students you will give them data on the U.N. after they have finished the rest of the worksheet.

   d. Allow approx. 10 minutes for each student to complete his/her section of the worksheet.

      Circulate among students to see that they are able to find requested information in the Country Profile and Constitutions worksheets.

      Remind students to indicate which, if any, government branch is dominant. They should also be prepared to say which major offices are filled by appointment, and which by election.

   e. Have students present their country's worksheet sections in front of the class, writing appropriate information on the chalkboard under each heading.

      Urge each student presenter to give reasons for his/her government's particular distribution of power.

      Teacher monitors data given, augmenting and correcting as needed. Encourage students to request clarification if they do not understand information given.

f. Review similarities and differences between the governments.

(1) Ask: "What are some common characteristics shared by all of the countries' governments?"

Write student responses on the chalkboard.
Responses may include: all have at least the three main branches, although there is sometimes mixing; most have a supreme court; citizens are allowed to vote for some officers, while others are appointed; etc.

(2) Say: "Now, let's list some of the differences."

Write student responses on the chalkboard.
Responses may include: some countries have distinct separation of governmental powers, while others have government branches that overlap; some countries have two heads of government, but one is only symbolic; legislatures can be made up of one or more houses; non-government bodies may have the top political authority; etc.

(3) Teacher asks for any additional comments or questions regarding the Constitution Comparisons exercise.

6. Optional Exercises

If time permits, Teacher may direct students through activities comparing constitutional components in greater depth. Topics may include:

- what constitutions say about the countries' histories and cultures
- role-plays of government officials in specific countries
  (e.g. "a day in the life" of the French Prime Minister, the King of Swaziland, and others)
- a comparison of amending processes in the various countries

See also Additional Activities section.

PART B: UNITED NATIONS CHARTER

1. Tell students they will now consider the United Nations Charter.

   a. Say: "There is one international constitution which is accepted by almost all of the world's countries...159, to be exact. That is the Charter of the United Nations. We will now look at the United Nations system, and compare it with our own national governments."

2. Explain the origin of the United Nations.

   a. Say: "In 1945, at the end of World War II, 51 countries established an organization to maintain world peace. The United Nations replaced the League of Nations, which had failed in a similar attempt following World War I. This time, all of the major nations joined, and the U.N. continues to function today. It's headquarters is in New York City, although various agencies are spread around the world.

3. Students will complete the United Nations worksheet packet, using the U.N. Charter.

   a. Distribute copies of the United Nations Charter and U.N. worksheet packets.

b. Tell students that the U.N. Charter, like most national constitutions, has a preamble and sections of articles describing the organization's principles and authority structure. Say that they will complete the U.N. worksheet in the same manner used with the Constitution worksheet for their country. Note that many of the individual rights and legal protections are contained in two documents they will consider in the next lesson.

c. Allow students sufficient time to transfer Charter information to the appropriate sections of the worksheet packet.

Monitor student progress, referring to the Teacher's worksheet copy as needed. Be sure that students identify article numbers for provisions cited.

4. Check finished United Nations worksheet with the class.

5. Compare authority structure and functions of the U.N. with those of the national governments.

a. Refer students to the U.N. section of their Constitutions Comparisons worksheets.

b. Have the class complete the U.N. section using their United Nations worksheet.

c. Ask students what is unique about the U.N. system.

Responses may include: it is an organization of members that share power (confederation); there is no chief executive, or supreme central authority; the only court (International Court of Justice) is independent of member nations' judiciary systems; member nations are pledged to support the Charter, despite their differences; etc.

d. Teacher may give the class sample situations, to see whether students understand how responsibility and authority is distributed.
(e.g. Which U.N. organ would direct members to cease weapons sales to South Africa?
Answer: the Security Council)

6. If time permits, have students research news articles on the U.N., identifying Charter provisions and/or specific organs involved.

7. Review / Test Questions (next page)

Lesson #3: Constitutions of the World

REVIEW / TEST QUESTIONS

1. Which of the countries we've looked at has a tricameral legislature, but does not allow the majority to be represented?
   (South Africa)

2. Who is the Prime Minister, and thereby head of government, of the United Kingdom?
   (Margaret Thatcher)

3. Summarize the reasons for establishing the United Nations.
   (to prevent war, to promote international cooperation and friendly relations, to maintain principles of justice and human rights)

4. Who are the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, and what special power do they have?
   (permanent members: U.S., U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, France, China; special power: ability of each to veto decisions of the Security Council)

5. A citizen of your assigned country vows to appeal his bank fraud conviction "to the highest court in the land." Which court would that be?
   (answers vary with assigned countries)

6. Greece claims that Turkey is violating international agreements by searching for oil in disputed waters of the eastern Mediterranean. What services can the United Nations provide to resolve this problem?
   (Greece could take legal action in the International Court of Justice, or submit a resolution to the General Assembly for approval; if either effort fails, Greece can ask the Security Council for assistance)

7. Why do you think most governments have many more elected officials in the legislative branch than in the executive or judicial branches?
   (more citizen input into law-making; to make sure that many opinions and perspectives are considered; accept reasoned responses)

8. The United Nations is a confederation system with no supreme authority. Each country reserves the right to reject a U.N. decision. Why won't countries yield ultimate power to a world government?
   (each country puts its own national interests first; people in the national government do not want to lose any of their own power; a country's cultural values and sovereignty is threatened if someone outside has the "last say;" accept reasoned responses)

9. The Palestine Liberation Organization has been recognized by nations of the Arab League as sole representative of the Palestinian people. Some say that the PLO should have the same voting rights as a country in the United Nations. Why should, or shouldn't, the PLO be given such rights?
   (Should: the world Palestinian population is larger than the population of several countries that have a U.N. vote; no one country now speaks for the millions of Palestinians; Shouldn't: it would set a bad precedent, and every refugee or minority population would want its own vote; Israel's allies call the PLO a terrorist organization; accept reasoned responses)

10. One U.N. resolution proposes that each country's military budget be limited to 2 percent of its gross national product (GNP). Proponents argue that such a move would de-escalate the arms race, and make more money available for health and welfare programs. What other arguments might be made for and against such a move?

    (For: each country's threat would decrease, if all limited military spending;
    Against: countries have unequal defense responsibilities and security requirements; for example, countries with large land areas but small GNPs would be at a disadvantage; accept reasoned responses)

11. In some socialist countries, the Communist Party has its own hierarchy that controls the official government. What do you think are the arguments for and against this type of political system?

    (For: uniformity of policy and planning might be achieved; people must still be elected or appointed to Party positions; it's their tradition, so let them use it;
    Against: it makes a mockery of the official government; too much is done in secret; it's anti-democratic; accept reasoned responses)

12. If you could amend one provision of your assigned country's constitution, what would it be? Why?

    (accept reasoned responses)

LESSON #4 _____

Focus on a Theme: Human Rights

Objectives: Students will be able to

- explain what is meant by human rights
- identify human rights and protections contained in the following documents:
  - U.S. Constitution
  - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  - International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights
  - individual country constitutions
- describe factors that distinguish concepts of human rights in different countries and cultures
- cite incidents of human rights violations, and likely rationales for each

Materials needed: Constitutions of the United States and of the 16 focus countries [Appendix A]; copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Internationcal Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, Country Profile worksheets, Constitution worksheet packets, United Nations worksheet packet, "What Are Human Rights?" worksheets, Amnesty International annual human rights reports and/or U.S. State Department human rights reports on focus countries, Country Human Rights Violations worksheets, Human Rights Conference worksheets, and Conference Resolution worksheets[Appendix B]; chalkboard and chalk.

Time required: 8-10 class periods

Procedures:

1. Teacher introduces students to various concepts of human rights.

   a. Catch students' attention by announcing a new and provocative (and fictitious) school policy.

      Example: A new dress code will be rigidly enforced...with proper haircuts and attire required. Lockers may be searched by any administrator, at any time; and, locker owners will be automatically responsible for any contraband found. A panel of local clergy has been appointed to screen articles in the school newspaper. Etc.

      Note: This activity is enhanced if the new policy is outlined on school stationery and announced in class by a school administrator.

   (1) Ask students: "Do you find anything wrong with the new policy?"

   (2) Discuss responses. What principles are being violated? Why are they important?

b. Define human rights as "powers, privileges, and protections belonging to all people simply because they are human beings."

c. Direct class to list and prioritize individual rights, freedoms, and protections.

(1) Distribute copies of the "What are Human Rights?" worksheet. Have students make a list of human rights and freedoms in the top section of the worksheet.

(2) Write student responses on the chalkboard.

(3) Have students vote on the 3 most important rights they've listed.

Rank-order the results.

Ask: "Why do you think these particular rights are most important; more so than the others?"

(4) Explain that concepts of human rights vary between cultures.

For example, western democracies tend to emphasize political and civil rights, while socialist countries stress economic rights.

d. Direct class discussion on conditions under which rights can be suspended (violated).

Example: Right to Life ..... violated in War

2. Teacher leads class review of human rights provisions in the U.S. Constitution.

a. Ask: "How does the U.S. stand on human rights? How do we find out?
Say: "First, we need to check the constitution."

b. Refer students to pages 4 to 6 of their copies of the completed Constitution worksheet packet on the United States.

(1) For each category on the worksheet, ask students to cite specific human rights provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

Ask: "Why do you think these rights are sufficiently important to be included in the U.S. Constitution?" and; "What does the sequence of rights in the amendments tell us about how American values developed?"

Draw students' attention to the first ten amendments (Bill of Rights), formed as the young nation developed its own political system still mindful of recent abuses by the British.

Have students identify the post-Civil War (Reconstruction) era amendments.

c. Discuss alleged U.S. violations of human rights.

(1) Students read a copy of the Amnesty International report section on human rights violations by the United States.

(2) Teacher asks: "What actions has the U.S. been charged with taking that violate human rights?" e.g. Death penalty.

Summarize charges on the chalkboard.

(3) Ask: "How do you think the U.S. would defend itself against such charges?"
e.g. Capital punishment protects society from repeated violence by individuals.

List defense positions next to charges on the chalkboard.

3. Students consider international agreements on human rights.

a. Teacher explains efforts to codify world human rights standards after the atrocities of World War II.

Say: "The world was shocked by the inhuman treatment of millions of people during World War II. After the war, several international agreements were signed to set standards of human rights and freedoms around the world. We're going to look at two of the most important agreements now."

b. Class reads, annotates, and discusses provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

(1) Distribute copies of the two human rights documents.

(2) Refer students to their United Nations worksheet packet, begun in Lesson #3.

Explain that they will list provisions of each human rights document in the appropriate sections on pages 4 to 6 of their worksheets, just as they did with their own country's constitution worksheet. Advise them to use a code to designate whether each article came from the Universal Declaration or the International Covenant.
e.g. UD or IC

(3) Allow sufficient time for students to complete the exercise.

Monitor student progress, refering to the Teacher's copy as needed.

(4) Check finished U.N. worksheet human rights sections with the class.

Teacher reads --or has students read-- aloud each section of the worksheet, noting relevant provisions of the international documents.

As students read specific articles of the Universal Declaration and International Covenant, the teacher should identify the occurence of weakening clauses, where respect for human rights may be suspended under certain conditions.
e.g. Rights are inviolable <u>except as provided by law.</u>

Ask: "Why do you think governments insisted on including weakening clauses?"
(so each can determine when conditions allow suspending rights; etc.)

c. Explain that human rights and protections can be divided into four different categories.

(1) Refer students, again, to the "What Are Human Rights?" worksheet.

(2) Say that human rights are divided into four categories, listed in section II.A. of the

worksheet. The definitions, which students should write in the appropriate spaces, are:

Fundamental.....dealing with the value and dignity of human life; including freedom from physical mistreatment and forced labor.

Political and Civil.....which include freedoms of expression, choice, religion, privacy, and the right to be treated fairly and equally.

Economic.....dealing with property and work rights, plus the rights to adequate food, clothing, shelter and medical care.

Social.....including educational and cultural rights, along with protection of the family.

(3) Students will categorize rights contained in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Have students list provisions of the Universal Declaration under the appropriate heading of section II.B. on the "What Are Human Rights?" worksheet. Tell students that some rights may fit in more than one category.

Discuss the ways students fit rights into specific categories.
Seek group consensus on the categorizations.

d. Teacher notes that many internationally-accepted rights do not appear in the U.S. or other national constitutions.

Say: "Few, if any, country constitutions contain a comprehensive list of human rights. Each country's constitution stresses a particular set of rights, as you will soon see."

4. Students consider human rights violations in their assigned countries.

a. Teacher explains that, despite international agreements, many governments and non-government organizations continue to violate human rights.

Say: "Countries often claim national security reasons for denying human rights to individuals and groups. In other words, the security of the state is deemed more important than the rights of individuals. Some countries will not admit that they are actually violating human rights. Remember that weakening clauses in the international human rights documents provide loopholes that some countries exploit."

(1) Note that several citizens groups monitor human rights abuses around the world. Amnesty International is the largest of the groups that also include Helsinki Watch and Americas Watch. They, along with agencies of the United Nations and some countries, periodically issue reports alleging human rights violations.

b. Students will identify and categorize human rights violations charged against their countries.

(1) Give each student a copy of the Amnesty International or U.S. State Department human rights report for their country.
Each student should also receive a Country Human Rights Violations worksheet.

(2) Instruct students to read the report and list specific violations in the left-hand

column of the Violations worksheet.

For each violation cited, each student should identify any provision of their country constitution that would apply (i.e. be violated) and list the appropriate article(s) in the center worksheet column, next to each violation.

Then, students should refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, identifying applicable provisions and listing them in the right-hand column of the worksheet.

Teacher should circulate among students to answer any questions regarding this activity.

c. Students prepare a defense of their countries against human rights charges.

(1) Inform students that they will participate in a human rights conference, in which they will have to defend their countries against human rights violations alleged in the human rights reports.

(2) Tell students that, on the back of the Violations worksheet, they should compose statements to justify each alleged violation lodged against their country. Excuses may emphasize security, ideology, religion, or other rationales. Mention that, when hard pressed, countries sometimes resort to outright denial of incidents, or claim that violation charges constitute interference in their internal (domestic) affairs.

Remind students that their grades for this exercise will depend, in part, on the extent to which their positions are imaginative and thorough.

(3) Allow sufficient time for students to complete both sides of the Country Human Rights Violations worksheet.

5. Teacher conducts an international human rights conference.

a. Arrange student desks in a circle or rectangle, placing country signs on each. Designate one desk for the Chairman (Teacher).

b. Explain to students that they are about to convene a special human rights session, under the aegis of the United Nations, to consider charges of human rights violations against U.N. member states. They will also have an opportunity to draft a resolution on human rights that will be considered by the U.N. General Assembly.

Say that each student will represent his/her country. As conference delegates, they will be expected to defend their own country's position, press the case of violations against another country, and judge the merits of other countries' human rights positions.

c. Students each prepare case against another country.

Give each student a copy of the Human Rights Conference worksheet and a copy of the human rights report of the country next to theirs in alphabetical order. Canada, for example, will prepare a case against Chile. United Kingdom will prepare a case against Canada.

Each delegate reads the human rights report on the country s/he is assigned to assail. On the worksheet, the student then summarizes violations in the center column and, in

the right-hand column, cites specific international human rights provisions on which the charges are based. Tell students they may refer to the human rights report for specific details during their conference presentation.

d. Teacher chairs debate of human rights violations charged against individual countries.

(1) Direct students from each country delegation, beginning with Canada, to state the charges against the next country.

Delegates on the defensive are allowed to respond to specific charges after the entire set of allegations is made.

Once the initial charges and responses have occurred, other countries' delegates may ask questions and make comments on the alleged violations.

All student delegates are expected to list the violations charged and provisions violated for each country in the appropriate blocks of the worksheet. Space should be left next to each charge, so that the defending country's position can be noted. Students should also note whether they agree with each country's explanation.

(2) Teacher may have country delegations vote on whether to accept or reject each country's human rights position statement.

e. Student delegates draft a consensus resolution on human rights.

(1) Hand each student a Conference Resolution worksheet.
Explain that the conference objective is to draft a resolution on human rights that can be endorsed by all, and sent to the U.N. General Assembly. Remind them that the resolution should be sensitive to cultural differences among countries, yet supportive of essential human rights, freedoms, and protections. Add that the operative clauses should include proposals for enforcing human rights.

(2) First, students draft resolution clauses individually, or with other members of their country delegation.

Tell students that preambulatory clauses cite principles, facts, and precedents. Operative clauses state new positions, intentions, and/or actions.
Example:

Preambulatory clauses -

1. Concerned that human rights violations continue around the world;
2. Reaffirming principles stated in the Universal Declaration and other human rights documents;
3. Recognizing the U.N.'s responsibility to promote human rights;

Operative clauses -

1. Pledges continued monitoring of human rights violations;
2. Directs the human rights commission to seek resolution of problems with accused parties;
3. Further Directs the Secretary-General to ensure U.N. compliance with human rights standards;
4. Urges Security Council sanctions against continued perpetrators of human rights violations.

(3) Then, have students divide into caucuses of 5 or 6 country delegations and negotiate a set of clauses to present to the entire (plenary) conference. Each caucus should

appoint a secretary to record the consensus agreement. The caucus proposals should be worded so that each caucus member can support them.

(4) Finally, students form a conference resolution from the caucus proposals.

Caucus recorders present all preambulatory clauses for the conferees' consideration, then follow with operative clauses.
(list clauses on the chalkboard)

Once all clauses are listed, delegations should vote on the entire resolution.

6. Review / Test Questions (next page)

Lesson #4: Focus on a Theme: Human Rights

REVIEW / TEST QUESTIONS

1. What are the four categories of human rights?
   (fundamental, political and civil, economic, social)

2. What do we call the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution?
   (Bill of Rights)

3. Explain why nations were prompted to create the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.
   (atrocities committed in World War II)

4. How are fundamental rights distinguished from political and civil rights?
   (fundamental: concerning right to life and dignity, free from physical mistreatment; political & civil: includes freedom of expression, and rights to fair and equal treatment)

5. Officials of Blueland have just confiscated houses and other property from members of the Blue Liberation Front. This action was taken in response to repeated demonstrations by the B.L.F. What provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have the Blueland officials violated?
   (Articles 2, 7, 12, 17, 19, 20, and 28)

6. Given an example of a weakening clause in the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.
   (Art. 4 Para. 1; Art. 6 Para. 2; and other applicable clauses)

7. Many countries are charged with illegally detaining suspected criminals; detaining persons without charge, and for long periods of time. What reasons do you think governments give for such behavior?
   (suspects are held until sufficient evidence is found; the suspect might otherwise escape; the suspect is too dangerous to be left on the street; national security; the suspect's terrorist friends will be exposed, or frightened into leaving; etc.)

8. What purpose is served by having all countries endorse one set of human rights, freedoms, and protections?
   (standards of behavior are established for all cultures; people can appeal mistreatment to a higher --i.e. international-- authority; individuals are less likely to face problems when travelling between countries; etc.)

9. The AIDS epidemic is a growing international problem. Several countries propose that the U.N. adopt a policy to quarantine all homosexuals and intravenous drug users within their own countries until an AIDS cure is found. Can this policy be adopted without undermining international human rights agreements? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of such a policy?
   (accept reasoned responses)

10. Human rights agreements are intended to protect individuals from the whims of government in their community. But, what about human rights within the family unit? What rights, freedoms, and protections should children have in the family; and who should be responsible for enforcement?
    (accept reasoned responses)

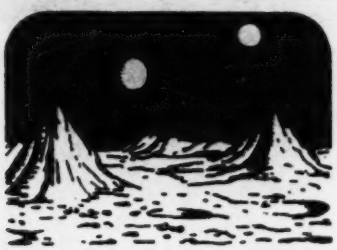
11. In some Islamic countries, thieves lose their fingers and hands as punishment for stealing. Does the international community have a moral responsibility to apply economic or military pressure to halt such practises? Why, or why not?

    (Yes: exceptions for some will lead to exceptions for many...standards must be universally enforced; No: to apply pressure means to interfere in a country's domestic affairs, and to threaten its cultural foundations; etc.)

12. What, if anything, might be done to improve the human rights component of the U.S. Constitution?

    (accept reasoned responses)

LESSON #5



A Constitutional Convention ... on Mars

Objectives: Students will be able to

- describe essential components of a constitution
- cite cultural factors affecting international law-making

Materials needed: Biosphere-Mars background report, Constitution for Mars worksheet, Country Constitutions worksheet packets, and Delegate's Observations worksheet [all in Appendix B]; chalkboard and chalk.

Time required: 5-7 class periods

Procedures:

1. Arrange student desks in a circle or rectangle, placing country signs on each. Designate one desk for the Convention Chairman (Teacher).

   Classroom visual materials may be adapted to provide an outer space ambiance. Materials might include posters of planets, spacecraft, constellations, and etcetera. Students might also draw Martian landscapes to place on the walls.

2. Teacher explains that students will develop a constitution for a multi-national human space colony on the planet Mars.

   Note: If time permits, preparation for this lesson might include student research on space travel, hypothetical space communities, and resource studies of Mars. Ideas for the Biosphere-Mars habitat scenario came from Discover magazine. Teacher may also want to make available a copy of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, limiting the deployment and use of weapons in space.

   a. Distribute copies of the Biosphere-Mars background report.
   Tell students that this is an annual report from human pioneers on Mars to an international committee on Earth.

   b. Read and discuss the Biosphere-Mars report with students.
   Ask if there are any questions about the report.
   Reiterate that the Biosphere-Mars project has reached a point where long-term provisions must be made for an organized society. They are in need of a constitution.

3. Students conduct a constitutional convention for the Mars colony.

   a. Teacher says: "You will now represent your assigned countries as delegates to a convention whose purpose is the development of a constitution for the permanent colony on Mars. The constitutional convention, to be conducted on Mars, has been authorized by the International Committee for Space Colonization. The committee was established by the U.N. in Earth year

2000 A.D. Your duty will be to draft a constitution that provides fair and effective government for the growing Mars community. The document should have all key elements of the national documents you have been analyzing. Remember that the Mars colony is a multi-national community, and care must be taken to respect the values of different cultural groups."

Tell students that, until now, the Mars community has been governed by leaders of the Soviet-American Pax 7 mission, whose temporary authority was granted by the International Committee.

b. Teacher explains the process for drafting the constitution.

(1) Say that the International Committee has stipulated that each country delegation will have an equal vote in adopting the constitution.

(2) Distribute and discuss the Constitution for Mars worksheets.

Go over each section of the worksheet with students. Mention that worksheet sections match the major components of country constitutions they've analyzed in previous lessons.
Say that they are encouraged to follow the worksheet format, but may adapt it if necessary.

Explain that there are many important factors to consider in drafting the Mars Constitution. For example:

- how will government power be divided?
- will each national group be equally represented in the government?
- who can vote for, and hold, political office?
- should the same legal code apply to everyone ...considering that some nationalities practise Islamic law, others oppose capital punishment?
- what will be the community's relationship with Earth?
- how will Martian resources (e.g. minerals) be managed?
- who should ratify the new constitution?

c. Student delegates draft a Constitution for Mars.

(1) First, each student reviews his/her assigned country's Constitution worksheet packet to become re-familiarized with provisions relevant to categories outlined on the Constitution for Mars worksheet.

Delegates of the same country should compare notes before the caucus sessions begin.

(2) Next, group students into caucuses of 5 or 6 countries, and have them negotiate a constitution to propose to the entire convention.
A sample grouping would be:

Group #1	Group #2	Group #3
Canada	United Kingdom	South Africa
Chile	China	France
Iran	Ethiopia	Japan
Philippines	Mexico	Nicaragua
Swaziland	Lebanon	Poland
U.S.S.R.		U.S.A.*

*Note: Teacher may appoint an extra delegate from one of the western industrial nations to stand-in as a voting representative for the U.S.A.

Each caucus appoints a secretary to act as recorder.

All caucus members discuss each constitution section in sequence (i.e. Preamble, executive branch, etc.) until agreement is reached.
Caucus proposals should be worded so that each caucus member can support them.

(3) Finally, students develop a consensus document from the constitution proposals of the caucuses.
The convention should designate a secretary to record consensus agreements.

Chairman (Teacher) guides conference discussion from one section to the next, beginning with the Preamble.

Note: Chairman may wish to establish rules of discussion (esp. time limits on debate) before starting the final drafting session.

Each caucus proposal is presented by the caucus' secretary, considered, then accepted or rejected by a vote of all delegations. Caucus proposals may be combined or adapted to create a consensus text for each section.

After all sections have been considered, a final convention vote should be taken on the entire constitution.

4. Students complete and discuss the Delegate's Observations worksheet.

Additional Activities

Lessons of this curriculum can be adapted or augmented in several ways. The following suggestions take into account that time-frames and content foci are bound to vary between schools and individual teachers.

Mini-Units

Option A: Compare 2 or 3 national constitutions with that of the United States.

By reducing the number of documents studied, the teacher may either save time or more closely examine a few countries. Countries may be selected to represent a diversity of cultures and political systems; or, countries may be chosen for their similarities of cultural tradition, geographic region, and other criteria. As an example, the constitutional documents of France, the United Kingdom, and Canada might be compared with that of the U.S., since the cultures share many philosophical assumptions.

Option B: Intensively examine one foreign constitution.

The teacher may prefer to do an in-depth study of a particular country. With additional research, students could learn about the day-to-day workings of a country's political system at several levels. The scope of "American Focus on World Constitutions" lessons has, of course, trained greatest scrutiny on the national governments of countries included.

Students might focus attention specifically on Iran, seeking to learn why the 1979 revolution occured, how society was changed, and what forces shape Iran's current foreign and domestic policies. Attached to the Iranian Country Constitution worksheet packet is a list of passages from the Koran and other Islamic sources that pertain to human rights.

Role-Plays

Option A: Acting as officials of a specific country, students could simulate one or more of the following political functions:

1. Legislative Session: Students represent members of the country's law-making unit(s), engaged in the process of enacting legislation. The country's embassy (Washington) or U.N. mission (New York) might be contacted for copies of bills actually considered.

2. National Election: Students simulate the election of legislative and/or executive officials, having researched the sequence of events and current campaign issues. With national elections due in several countries, students could simulate activities in advance, then watch how actual events unfold.

3. Treaty Ratification: Presented with a U.N.-sponsored treaty, such as a Nuclear Weapons Freeze, students role-play government officials and representatives of special interest groups in the process of treaty ratification. Depending on the country selected, the teacher may have to remind students which political units (e.g. Soviet Communist Party) wield superior, if not supreme, decision-making power.

4. Mock Trial: Students role-play participants in a civil or criminal court case. With adequate research, U.S.-oriented mock trial curriculum units can be adapted to suit the judicial process in a foreign country. A variation of

this option is to try the same case in the court systems of two or more countries.

5 Constitutional Convention: Under several convention scenarios, students could: re-enact the process by which a country's constitution was actually created; re-write a country's constitution, having researched problems it now confronts; and, re-write the U.S. Constitution, as a follow-on to the preceding activity. Also; in preparation for Lesson #3 activities, students could research a country's history and current issues, theorize what the government structure looks like, then compare their supposition with actual constitutional provisions.

Option B: Model United Nations activities.

Using preparatory materials gained from a local high school Model U.N. advisor or the U.N. Association (New York City), students can role-play national delegates to a session of the General Assembly, or judges and other participants in a case tried by the International Court of Justice (World Court).

Current Issues Forums

How would issues faced by U.S. citizens be resolved in other countries? Prayer in school, drug abuse, AIDS prevention, unemployment, pollution. Almost any issue currently in the news can be examined from the perspectives of one or more cultures. Class formats could range from an international conference to a town meeting in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia. Optimally, students would be given access to foreign newspapers and news magazines for these activities. Global insights derived could then be used by the class in reconsidering American responses to present and future challenges.

Geography Applications

A wide variety of geographic activities can be employed to enhance the effectiveness of this curriculum.

Lesson #2, on the U.S. Constitution, could be augmented with an examination of how location, movement, and human-environment interactions helped shape charters of the Thirteen Colonies ...and ultimately the U.S. Constitution. Students might use maps to plot landforms, climates, and natural vegetation in each colony, along with the distribution and social characteristics of human settlements. Significance of these factors can then be sought in a review of the state charters.

Lesson #3 can be expanded to include many geographic activities. In addition to locating individual countries on a map of the world, students may classify countries (using color codes) by: form of government; level of development (Four Worlds); region; dominant religion; languages; ethnic and racial groups; climate; political, economic, and military alliances; colonial affiliation; and, other descriptors available in world almanacs and other reference materials.

Several of these geo-physical and geo-political themes can be incorporated in the mapping of each country. In subsequent discussions, students consider how each factor relates to a country's unique situation in the world. Similarities between countries are also considered, in view of geographic data the students have assembled.

One of the classroom wall posters could use removable lettering and numbers to describe the daily weather report in each country being studied. Many U.S. newspapers list world weather conditions on the local weather page.

Lesson #4 lends itself well to a visual (map) comparison of countries by degree of personal freedom and international human rights standing.

As a supplement to Lesson #5, students are given a map of the Martian landscape and, with additional scientific information about the planet, decide on the best place to site their colony. Students could also role-play civil engineers in designing layouts of residential, industrial, and government modules for the colony.

Most of the geographic applications can be paired with audio-visual aids, such as slides and films of the countries. National Geographic magazines are an excellent source of pictorial supplements. The teacher might have students plot a vacation itinerary on a country's highway map, then use A-V aids to illustrate what students would see on their trip.

SOURCES

The most comprehensive source of information about the development of national constititutions --including texts and appendices-- is Constitutions of the Countries of the World, edited by A.P. Blaustein and G.H. Flanz, and available from Oceana Publications Inc., Dobbs Ferry, New York 10522.

For background information and documents that reflect each country's own perspectives, students should write to individual embassies in Washington, D.C. or United Nations missions in New York City. Addresses and phone numbers appear in many almanacs, and are also available through telephone information services.

Copies of actual U.N. resolutions and other documents can be obtained from the Public Inquiries Unit, Room GA-57, United Nations, New York, NY 10017. Model United Nations materials can be ordered from the U.N. Association - USA, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6104.

Complete sets of the U.S. State Department Background Notes can be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Several useful publications are available through the Constitutional Rights Foundation, at 601 South Kingsley Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90005. They include a curriculum unit entitled "International Law in a Global Age", and the periodical "Bill of Rights in Action." The American Bar Association's "Update" (published thrice yearly) contains useful classroom materials. The Fall 1984 (Vol.8 No.3) issue focusses specifically on International Law. "Updates" are available from ABA, 750 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611.

A number of excellent curriculum units and periodicals on related topics are available from the Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado, 80208 and from Global Perspectives in Education, 218 East 18th Street, New York, NY 10003.

The PBS TV series "The Constitution: That Delicate Balance" provides examples of forums that can be adapted to address controversial issues in a foreign constitutional environment.

Amnesty International Report 1987 can be obtained from Amnesty International USA, 322 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001. Other publications and audio-visual materials dealing with human rights are also available.